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Gravity Probe B is on the pad



Expedition 8 crew prepares for arrival of Expedition 9

▲ ELV Update: The Gravity Probe B (GP-B) spacecraft was moved to Space Launch Complex 2 at Vandenberg AFB, Calif., April 1 and mated to the Boeing Delta II rocket. The Flight Program Verification, an integrated test of the Delta II vehicle and the spacecraft, was conducted April 5. Installation of the fairing around GP-B is scheduled for Thursday.

▲ ISS Update: On April 1, Station managers conducted a Stage Operations Readiness Review and found no constraints to the planned April 19 launch of the ISS Soyuz 8 carrying Expedition 9 Commander Gennady Padalka and Flight Engineer Mike Fincke, along with European Space Agency astronaut André Kuipers of the Netherlands. Kuipers will be aboard the Station for nine days performing scientific experiments under a commercial contract between ESA and the Federal Space Agency (of Russia) during the handover to the new permanent crew.

Aboard the Station, Commander Mike Foale and Flight Engineer Alexander Kaleri successfully completed the initial maintenance and some functional testing of two new Russian Orlan spacesuits delivered in January aboard the most recent Progress supply ship. Padalka and Fincke plan to use them on the first spacewalk of Expedition 9.

Foale also completed an external survey of the Station using cameras on the Canadarm2 robotic arm. During the survey, Foale solved a mystery, by reporting to Mission Control that a sound he had heard from outside of the Destiny laboratory module was being caused each time he commanded the Lab's external camera to tilt up and down.

Mission Control completed a successful test of software that will operate the Thermal Rotary Radiator Joints on the Station's truss. The large rotating joints will be used to position the Station's radiators as they dissipate heat from the complex. Ground controllers ran the check of

programs that will automate the positioning of the Station's radiators in the future when the Station's full cooling system is activated.

Go to <http://scipoc.msfc.nasa.gov/> for details on Station science operations.

◆ **NASA Science News** – Last week a surprising hurricane crashed into Brazil. It was surprising because hurricanes aren't supposed to be in that part of the world. What made this storm different? Scientists are scrutinizing satellite data, hoping to find out. Read the full story at http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2004/02apr_hurricane.htm

◆ **Popular scrub jay tour in celebration of EEAW (April 21 only)** – The lands of the Kennedy Space Center provide one of the last strongholds for the Florida scrub jay. This colorful and gregarious bird is losing ground as Florida's scrub lands are developed. During the one-hour field trip on April 21, in celebration of Earth Day, Dorn Whitmore, who is with the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, will show you scrub jays up close and discuss how KSC lands are managed for this threatened species. Wear comfortable walking shoes (no sandals, please), and sunscreen, bug spray and a hat are recommended. Meet at the EEAW Welcome Table in front of the O&C Building at noon. If you attended the tour last year, please give others a chance to see the Florida scrub jay. Permission from supervisors is needed, and space is limited. To participate, contact Shannah Trout at 867-8443.

◆ **Reminder:** NASA 2004 Software of the Year Award nominations are due Friday. All submissions must be submitted through the appropriate Administrative Offices to YA-C1/Carol Anne Dunn, 867-6381.

◆ **Did You Know?** There are 15 days until Earth Day, April 21.